CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A fire alarm system, comprising:

a fire alarm notification appliance;

a warning detector which detects a warning alert from an external source, the fire alarm notification appliance providing notification of the warning alert in response to detection of the warning alert.

2. The fire alarm system of claim 1, the fire alarm notification appliance providing notification in response to detection of a change in alert status of the warning alert.

3. The fire alarm system of claim 1, the external source being a government agency.

4. The fire alarm system of claim 3, the government agency being the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

5. The fire alarm system of claim 4, the warning device being a NOAA weather radio receiver.

6. The fire alarm system of claim 4, the warning detector comprising an interface to a NOAA weather radio receiver.

7. The fire alarm system of claim 1, the warning detector comprising a radio receiver equipped to receive the warning alert.

8. The fire alarm system of claim 1, the warning detector comprising an interface to a radio receiver equipped to receive the warning alert.

9. The fire alarm system of claim 8, the interface comprising at least one relay contact.

10. The fire alarm system of claim 8, the interface comprising a serial interface.

11. The fire alarm system of claim 1, the warning detector receiving warning alerts via at least one of: Internet, telephone, and cellular phone.

12. The fire alarm system of claim 1, the fire alarm notification appliance providing notification of the detected warning alert by transmitting a voice message.

13. The fire alarm system of claim 1, the fire alarm notification appliance providing notification of the detected warning alert by transmitting a predefined audio pattern.

14. The fire alarm system of claim 1, the fire alarm notification appliance providing notification of the detected warning alert by transmitting a predefined flash pattern.

15. The fire alarm system of claim 1, the notification appliance providing different notifications for different warning alerts.

16. The fire alarm system of claim 1, further comprising:

a delay module which provides a delay before transmission of the notification warning.

17. The fire alarm system of claim 1, further comprising:

a verification module which allows confirmation of the validity of the warning alert before transmission of the notification.

18. The fire alarm system of claim 1, further comprising:

a battery backup system.

19. The fire alarm system of claim 1, further comprising:

a visual annunciator comprising plural visual indicators used to indicate a current alert level.

20. The fire alarm system of claim 19, the visual indicators being light emitting diodes.

21. The fire alarm system of claim 19, the visual indicators being color-coded.

22. The fire alarm system of claim 19, the visual annunciator being incorporated into a fire alarm control panel.

23. The fire alarm system of claim 19, the visual annunciator being a stand-alone device in communication with the warning detector.

24. The fire alarm system of claim 19, the visual annunciator being incorporated into the fire alarm notification appliance.

25. A method, in a fire alarm system, for providing warnings, the method comprising:

detecting a warning alert from an external source; and

providing, from a fire alarm notification appliance, notification of the warning alert in response to detection of the warning alert.

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising:

providing, from the fire alarm notification appliance, notification in response to detection of a change in alert status of the warning alert

27. The method of claim 25, the external source being a government agency.

28. The method of claim 27, the government agency being the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

29. The method of claim 28, the warning alert being detected by a NOAA weather radio receiver interfaced with the fire alarm system.

30. The method of claim 28, the warning alert being detected by a NOAA weather radio receiver integrated into the fire alarm system.

31. The method of claim 25, the warning alert being detected by a radio receiver equipped to receive the warning alert, the radio receiver being integrated into the fire alarm system.

32. The method of claim 25, the warning alert being detected by a radio receiver equipped to receive the warning alert, the radio receiver interfaced with the fire alarm system.

33. The method of claim 32, the method further comprising:

signaling detection of the warning alert by actuating at least one relay contact.

34. The method of claim 32, the method further comprising:

signaling detection of the warning alert via a serial interface.

35. The method of claim 25, warning alerts being received via at least one of: Internet, telephone, and cellular phone.

36. The method of claim 25, the step of providing notification of the detected warning alert comprising:

transmitting a voice message.

37. The method of claim 25, the step of providing notification of the detected warning alert comprising:

transmitting a predefined audio pattern.

38. The method of claim 25, the step of providing notification of the detected warning alert comprising:

transmitting a predefined flash pattern.

39. The method of claim 25, further comprising:

providing different notifications for different warning alerts.

40. The method of claim 25, further comprising:

delaying transmission of the notification warning.

41. The method of claim 25, further comprising:

providing means for confirmation of the validity of the warning alert before transmission of the notification.

42. The method of claim 25, further comprising:

indicating, in a visual annunciator with plural visual indicators, a current alert level.

43. The method of claim 42, the visual indicators being light emitting diodes.

44. The method of claim 42, the visual indicators being color-coded.

45. The method of claim 42, the visual annunciator being incorporated into a fire alarm control panel.

46. The method of claim 42, the visual annunciator being a stand-alone device in communication with the warning detector.

47. The method of claim 42, the visual annunciator being incorporated into the fire alarm notification appliance.

48. A fire alarm system comprising:

means for detecting a warning alert from an external source; and

means for providing, from a fire alarm notification appliance, notification of the warning alert in response to detection of the warning alert.

49. The fire alarm system of claim 48, further comprising:

means for providing, from the fire alarm notification appliance, notification in response to detection of a change in alert status of the warning alert

50. A fire alarm system, comprising:

a system controller

a plurality of fire alarm notification appliances in communication with the system controller;

a warning detector in communication with the system controller, the warning detector detecting a warning alert from an external source; and

a visual annunciator comprising plural color-coded indicators, the visual annunciator being in communication with the warning detector and indicating a current alert level in response to a detected change in alert status.

51. The fire alarm system of claim 50, the color-coded indicators being light emitting diodes.

52. The fire alarm system of claim 50, the visual annunciator being incorporated into any of: the system controller; and at least one of the fire alarm notification appliances.

53. The fire alarm system of claim 50, the visual annunciator being a stand-alone device in communication with the warning detector.

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